

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly for a motor vehicle, comprising:
a bumper structure comprising:
a bumper beam adapted for attachment to a frame of a motor vehicle;
a hitch receiver attached to said bumper beam;
a bumper cover [[for]] concealing said bumper beam, with said bumper cover having an opening for accessing said hitch receiver; and
an access door [[for]] selectively concealing said hitch receiver, with said access door being slidably mounted to said bumper structure such that said access door is movable from a closed position in which said access door closes said opening such that said hitch receiver is concealed, to an open position in which said hitch receiver is accessible and said access door is stored, with said access door remaining kinematically retained to said bumper structure in both said closed position and said open position.

Claim 2. (Cancelled)

Claim 3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim [[3]] 1, wherein said access door is slidably movable in a lateral direction, with said access door being slidably attached to a plurality of channels formed in the bumper cover.

Claim 5. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim [[3]] 1, wherein said access door is slidably movable in a generally vertical direction.

Claim 6. (Cancelled)

Claim 7. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said bumper beam is ~~adapted to be~~ attached to a frame at the front of a motor vehicle.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said bumper beam is ~~adapted to be~~ attached to a frame at the rear of a motor vehicle.

Claim 9. (Cancelled)

Claim 10. (Cancelled)

Claim 11. (Cancelled)

Claim 12. (Cancelled)

Claim 13. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said bumper beam is ~~adapted to be~~ attached to a rail of a motor vehicle.

Claim 14. (Currently amended) A method for providing a concealable tow hitch for an automotive vehicle, comprising the steps of:

providing a bumper beam which is rigidly attached to a frame of the motor vehicle;

providing a hitch receiver integral with said bumper beam;

providing a bumper cover [[for]] concealing said bumper beam, with said bumper cover having an aperture for accessing said hitch receiver; and

providing an access door which is ~~kinematically retained upon~~ slidably attached to channels formed in said bumper cover and movable between a closed position in which said access door encloses said aperture such that said hitch receiver is concealed, and an open position in which said hitch receiver is accessible and said access door is stored.

Claim 15. (Cancelled)

Claim 16. (Cancelled)

Claim 17. (Cancelled)

Claim 18. (Original) A method according to Claim 14, wherein said bumper beam is attached to said frame at the front of the motor vehicle.

Claim 19. (Original) A method according to Claim 14, wherein said bumper beam is attached to said frame at the rear of the motor vehicle.

Claim 20. (Currently amended) An automotive vehicle, comprising:

a body having two longitudinal ends;

a frame extending under said body for at least a portion of the length of said body;

a bumper beam extending transversely across one of said longitudinal ends of said body; with said bumper beam being attached to said frame;

a hitch attached to said bumper beam;

a bumper cover [[for]] concealing said bumper beam, with said bumper cover having an opening for accessing said hitch; and

an integral access door for selectively concealing said hitch, with said access door being slidably mounted to said bumper cover such that said access door is slidably movable from a first position in which said access door closes said opening such that said hitch is concealed, to a second position in which said hitch receiver is accessible and said access door is stored, with said access door remaining attached to said bumper cover in both of said first position and said second position.

Claim 21. (Cancelled)

Claim 22. (Cancelled)

Claim 23. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim [[22]] 20, wherein said access door is slidably movable in a lateral direction.

Claim 24. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim [[22]] 20, wherein said access door is slidably movable in a generally vertical direction, with said access door being retained upon a plurality of channels formed in said bumper cover.

Claim 25. (Cancelled)

Claim 26. (Original) A bumper assembly according to Claim 20 wherein said bumper beam is attached to said frame at the front of the motor vehicle.

Claim 27. (Original) A bumper assembly according to Claim 20 wherein said bumper beam is attached to said frame at the rear of the motor vehicle.

Claim 28. (Original) A bumper assembly according to Claim 20 wherein said bumper cover and said access door each comprise molded plastic.

Claim 29. (Cancelled)

Claim 30. (Cancelled)

Claim 31. (Currently amended) A bumper assembly according to Claim [[30]] 39, wherein said spring comprises a torsion bar.

Claim 32. (Cancelled)

Claim 39. (New) An automotive vehicle, comprising:

a body having two longitudinal ends;

a frame extending under said body for at least a portion of the length of said body;

a bumper beam extending transversely across one of said longitudinal ends of said body; with said bumper beam being attached to said frame;

a hitch attached to said bumper beam;

a bumper cover [[for]] concealing said bumper beam, with said bumper cover having an opening for accessing said hitch; and

an integral access door for selectively concealing said hitch, with said access door being hingedly mounted to said bumper cover, with said door having a spring for driving the door from a first position in which said access door closes said opening such that said hitch is concealed, to a second position in which said hitch receiver is accessible, when a latch is released.